

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /031 W
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O R 261000Z JUL 74

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO AMEMBASSY RABAT IMMEDIATE

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1081

USINT ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

S E C R E T DAMASCUS 1492

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MO, US, SS

SUBJECT: LARAKI VISIT TO WASHINGTON

REF: RABAT 3307

1. DURING A JULY 25 CALL ON HAMOUD SHOUFFI, DIRECTOR OF AMERICAN AFFAIRS AT THE SYRIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY, I RAISED THE MATTER OF SYRIAN SUPPORT FOR MOROCCO OVER THE QUESTION OF THE SPANISH SHARA. SHOUFFI SAID THAT HE DID NOT KNOW WHAT THE OFFICIAL POSITION ON THIS MATTER IS AS YET BUT OPINED THAT SYRIA MIGHT FIND ITSELF IN A SOMEWHAT DIFFICULT POSITION GIVEN ITS GOOD RELATIONS WITH BOTH SPAIN AND MOROCCO. HE ADDED THAT SYRIA, HOWEVER, WOULD CERTAINLY PUBLICLY SUPPORT MOROCCO BOTH BECUASE IT WAS AN ARAB COUNTRY AND BECAUSE MOROCCO HAD SENT TROOPS TO HELP SYRIA DURING THE OCTOBER WAR. SHOUFFI CONTINUED THAT AT THE SAME TIME, SYRIA MIGHT TRY TO PLAY A MEDIATING ROLE BUT HE WAS NOT CERTAIN OF THIS.

2. MEANWHILE, FROM A LOCAL NEWSPAPERWOMAN

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WHO HAS BEEN A RELIABLE SOURCE IN THE PAST,

I LEARNED JULY 24 THAT GENERAL ABD AL-GHANI IRAHIM (DIRECTOR OF POLITICAL ADMINISTRATION IN THE BAATH REGIONAL COMMAND AND DIRECTOR OF MORAL GUIDANCE IN THE ARMY) HAS JUST RETURNED FROM MOROCCO WHERE HE WAS SENT ON A SECRET MISSION TO COORDINATE PLANNING WITH THE MOROCCANS ON THE POSSIBILITY OF THE DESPATCH TO MOROCCO OF SYRIAN TROOPS TO HELP MOROCCO FACE SPAIN IN THE SAHARA. THE EMBASSY SOURCE DID NOT KNOW IF A FINAL DECISION HAS BEEN MADE BUT ADDED THAT THERE ARE ELEMENTS WITHIN THE SYRIAN ARMY WHICH WOULD LIKE TO SEE SYRIA SUPPORT MOROCCO GIVEN MOROCCO'S SUPPORT FOR SYRIA DURING THE OCTOBER WAR.

3. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH I HAVE NO WAY OF CONFIRMING THE REPORT IN PARA 2 ABOVE, I BELIEVE THAT SYRIA WILL CERTAINLY SUPPORT MOROCCO IN THE VARIOUS INTERNATIONAL FORA. WHETHER THIS SUPPORT WILL GO BEYOND WORDS REMAINS TO BE SEEN BUT I WOULD RULE IT OUT ENTIRELY.
SCOTES

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY ASSISTANCE, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION, TERRITORIAL CLAIMS, FOREIGN ASSISTANCE
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 26 JUL 1974
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: kelleyw0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974DAMASC01492
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740203-0201
From: DAMASCUS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740715/aaaaamqy.tel
Line Count: 80
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: RABAT 3307
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: kelleyw0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 12 JUN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <12 JUN 2002 by elyme>; APPROVED <27 FEB 2003 by kelleyw0>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: LARAKI VISIT TO WASHINGTON
TAGS: PFOR, MO, US, SS
To: RABAT
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005